

**TESTIMONY OF NANCY BOBRYSH SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS AND HIGHER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON MARCH 3, 2015**

**H.B. No. 6824 An Act Concerning the State Budget For the Biennium Ending
June Thirtieth 2017, and Making Appropriations Thereafter and Other Provisions
Related to Revenue**

Nancy Bobrysh, appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning H.B. No. 6824-An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, and Making Appropriations Thereafter and Other Provisions Related to Revenue. It is imperative that the funding for the CT AHEC (Area Health Education Center) Network be restored (\$456K). Central AHEC, Inc. has provided me with the experience necessary to pursue a Master's Degree in Public Health (in addition to my doctorate D.O.). As an Americorps Member, I would not have been able to gain the hands on experience that I did working with this non-profit.

I will be attending medical school next fall and have been serving my Americorps term for the last 6 months with Central AHEC. As a project coordinator and public health worker, I have been able to gain hands on experience by providing health education to medically underserved populations (as well as coordinate various youth programs). This experience has proven to be extremely valuable in my professional growth as well as influenced my decision to pursue a dual Doctor of Osteopathy/Masters in Public Health Degree. I see the value of all of the AHEC centers in what they provide to the community. AHEC provides Connecticut residents with critical resources and programs that are both timely and essential in developing a healthcare workforce which is cost effective, culturally competent, interprofessional and responsive to healthcare needs of the state.

For the past 17 years the Connecticut Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Network and its four regional centers has successfully linked local community groups with the resources of the University of Connecticut, its Health Center and other academic institutions and health professions training programs across the state. With the focus of supporting and developing Connecticut's healthcare workforce, CT AHEC provides state-wide coverage and programming to thousands of residents through its collaboration with more than 200 community based partner organizations.

AHEC is based at the University of Connecticut Health Center and is implemented through four regional centers located in the Willimantic, Hartford, Waterbury, and Bridgeport areas. The four centers enable the AHEC Program to carry out local programs with great efficiency. As a statewide program, it functions locally to provide high quality, efficient, effective and flexible services that meet local needs.

Fiscal support for AHEC is as diverse as its programs with state, federal, foundation and private support. Withdrawal of state support will jeopardize these other resources. In an era of healthcare transformation, maintaining the \$456,000 AHEC line item in the 2016-2017 state budget is critical to assure that the CT AHEC Network will be there to deliver its unique services and programs to our residents as we create the diverse, well trained and cost effective interprofessional healthcare workforce that Connecticut requires and deserves.